

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARAMA 00556 201417Z
ACTION SS-25

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EXDIS

FOR ASST SECY TODMAN FROM ZURHELLEN

E.G. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDIP
SUBJ: PROTECTION OF DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL

REF: STATE 7295

1. I AM GRATEFUL FOR REFTEL AND FOR THE SUPPORT WHICH THE BUREAU GAVE US ON THIS MATTER. WHILE WE DO NOT INTEND TO PURSUE THE MATTER FURTHER, IN THE BELIEF THAT NO USEFUL PURPOSE WOULD BE SERVED, IT REMAINS TO BE A MATTER OF THE

UTMOST SERIOUSNESS WHEN A DIPLOMATIC DEPENDENT, AND A PREGNANT ONE AT THAT, CAN BE OPENLY ATTACKED ON THE PUBLIC STREETS AT HIGH NOON AND THE POLICE CONCLUDE, BY MEANS OF A SO-CALLED "INVESTIGATION" IN WHICH NEITHER THE VICTIM NOR ANYONE CONNECTED WITH HER WAS CONTACTED IN ANY WAY, MUCH LESS QUESTIONED ABOUT THE FACTS, THAT THE CLAIM OF AN ATTACK HAD BEEN "WITHOUT FOUNDATION." WE NOT ONLY HAVE THE IMMEDIATE STATEMENTS OF MRS. RICCIUTI THAT THE MAN HAD TRIED TO CHOKE HER, HER SMALL CHILD ALSO TOLD HER FATHER, AT ONCE AND WITHOUT PROMPTING, THAT THE MAN HAD TRIED TO CHOKE HER MOTHER, AND AN EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEE SUBMITTED TO ME AN
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AFFIDAVIT STATING THAT THE ASSAILANT HAD, IN HIS OWN HEARING, THREATENED TO USE A KNIFE ON MRS. RICCIUTI. IN SHORT I REMAIN THOROUGHLY CONVINCED, AFTER AS FULL AN INVESTIGATION OF MY OWN AS I CAN MAKE, THAT THE ATTACK DID OCCUR, THAT THE ASSILANT CONTINUED TO THREATEN FURTHER ATTACKS IN THE PRESENCE OF WITNESSES, THAT THE POLICE ON THE SPOT GAVE NO ASSISTANCE OR PROTECTION TO MRS. RICCIUTI SUCH

AS WOULD HAVE BEEN WARRANTED EITHER BY HER DIPLOMATIC STATUS OR HER PHYSICAL CONDITION, AND THAT THE POLICE INVESTIGATION WAS NOT A SERIOUS ATTEMPT TO GET AT THE FACTS AND COULD NOT HAVE BEEN IF THE VICTIM HERSELF WAS NOT EVEN INTERVIEWED. HOWEVER, AS YOU NOTE, OUT MAIN CONCERN WAS THE WELFARE OF MRS. RICCIUTI AND HAPPILY THAT HAS TURNED OUT ALL RIGHT. I HAVE SHOWN YOUR MESSAGE TO RICCIUTI AND ASKED HIM TO PASS ON TO HIS WIFE YOUR CONCERN AND REGRET. THEY ARE BOTH LEVEL-HEADED PEOPLE AND HAVE NOT LET THIS INCIDENT INTERFERE WITH THEIR WHOLESOME ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE JOB HERE.

2. AS TO THE "DISPROPORTIONATE" TONE OF MY NOTE, THAT WAS NOT THE REACTION OF THE CHIEF OF PROTOCGL (MRS. RIDDER, WHOM YOU WILL REMEMBER) WHEN I DELIVERED THE NOTE TO HER PERSONALLY WITHIN AN HOUR OF THE INCIDENT. ON THE CONTRARY, UPON READING IT SHE TOLD ME THAT WE (DIPLOMATS) DID NOT KNOW WHAT A TOUGH JOB SHE AND THE MINISTRY OF GENERAL AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAD HAD SINCE INDEPENDENCE IN TRYING TO EDUCATE THE POLICE TO THE POSITION OF DIPLOMATS IN AN INDEPENDENT COUNTRY. THE POLICE HAD TWICE GONE ONTO EMBASSY PREMISES (GUYANA AND INDONESIA) AND TRIED TO QUESTION PEOPLE AND TAKE ACTION AGAINST DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY, AND THE DEAN OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS HAD RAISED THE WHOLE QUESTION OF POLICE BEHAVIOR WITH THE PRIME MINISTER. THE TROUBLE WAS, SHE SAID, THAT THE CHIEF OF POLICE WAS LOYAL TO HIS MEN AND NOT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MATTER WHAT HAPPENED HE WOULD NEVER ADMIT THAT THERE HAD BEEN ANY KIND OF A SHORTCOMING ON THE PART OF A POLICE OFFICER. IF I HAD HAD TO CHARACTERIZE HER REACTION TO MY NOTE ON THE SPOT, IT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN THAT SHE CONSIDERED IT "DISPROPORTIONATE" BUT RATHER THAT SHE WELCOMED A FORCEFUL STATEMENT THAT MIGHT BRING HOME THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PROBLEM TO THE POLICE AUTHORITIES. I THEREFORE INTERPRET THE IDEA OF THE NOTE BEING "DISPROPORTIONATE" AS PART OF THE EX POST FACTO DEFENSIVE REACTION OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT. YOU WILL HAVE NOTED FROM PARA 4 OF PARAMARIBO 482 THAT HEINEMANN REFUSED TO RESPOND TO MY QUESTION AS TO WHETHER THE NOTE WOULD HAVE BEEN THOUGHT DISPROPORTIONATE TO THE INCIDENT IF THE POLICE INVESTIGATION HAD, IN FACT, SUPPORTED THE CHARGE OF ASSAULT.

3. I SHARE YOUR HOPE THAT THIS INCIDENT WILL RESULT IN A MORE COMPLETE REALIZATION BY THE POLICE OF THEIR OBLIGATIONS TOWARD DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL. FINALLY, LEST YOU MISUNDERSTAND OUR SITUATION IN ANY WAY, YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT THE WHOLE MATTER HAS BEEN HENDLED IN A PROPER, PROFESSIONAL AND DISPASSIONATE MANNER, WITH NO PERSONAL FEELINGS OR REPERCUSSIONS OF ANY KIND. HEINEMANN WAS AT MY HOUSE FOR LUNCH WITHIN A FEW DAYS AFTER THE INCIDENT,

HAVING ACCEPTED THE INVITATION DURING THE MIDDLE OF THE
CONTROVERSY. A POLICE REPRESENTATIVE ATTENDED A RECEPTION
AT RICCIUTI'S LAST WEEK, SEEING OFF THREE CUSTOMS AGENTS
FOR WHOM RICCIUTI HAD ARRANGED A NARCOTICS TRAINING COURSE
IN THE U.S.
ZURHELLEN

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